



CHARLES D. BAKER  
GOVERNOR

KARYN E. POLITO  
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

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SECRETARY OF HOUSING AND  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
Division of Professional Licensure  
Board of Registration for Speech-Language  
Pathology & Audiology  
1000 Washington Street, Suite 710  
Boston, Massachusetts 02118

EDWARD A. PALLESCHI  
UNDERSECRETARY OF CONSUMER  
AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS  
REGULATION

LAYLA R. D'EMILIA  
COMMISSIONER, DIVISION OF  
PROFESSIONAL LICENSURE

TO: All Licensees of the Board of Registration for Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology

DATE: 06/10/2020

RE: UPDATED POLICY: License Renewal, Continuing Education, and Telepractice During the State of Emergency for Coronavirus (COVID-19)

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In response to the state of emergency declared by Governor Baker on March 10, 2020, and pursuant to Executive Orders issued by the Governor, the Board of Registration for Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology (“Board”) has prepared the following information for all holders of Board-issued licenses:

- 1) License Renewal: Pursuant to the Governor’s Executive Order (COVID-19 order Number 41) dated June 26, 2020, any license or certificate issued by the Board that has an expiration date falling between March 10, 2020 and July 10, 2020 will expire on October 1, 2020 and must be renewed by that date; and licenses that have expiration dates from July 11, 2020 forward expire and must be renewed by the expiration date listed on the license.
- 2) Continuing Education: Licensees whose expirations (see above) are extended until October 1, 2020 have until October 1, 2020 to complete any continuing education required for the renewal. Licensees whose licenses have expiration dates from July 11, 2020 forward must complete any required continuing education prior to renewing the license.
- 3) Telepractice: The Board’s Policy on Providing Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology Services by Electronic Means (“Telepractice Policy”) is **temporarily** amended as set forth below. When the state of emergency ends, this temporary amendment will no longer be in effect except as described below, and the Board’s Telepractice Policy will again become effective.
  - a. All licensing requirements of the Telepractice Policy remain in effect; thus all persons who provide telepractice services to clients who reside or are located in Massachusetts must be licensed by the Board; and Board licensees must comply with statutes, regulations and policies of the jurisdiction where the client is located.



- b. During the state of emergency, the Board hereby waives the requirement of the Telepractice Policy that before providing telepractice services, a speech-language pathologist or audiologist must obtain ten (10) hours of training in telepractice. Within four (4) months of beginning to provide telepractice services, speech-language pathologists and audiologists must obtain the required ten (10) hours of training in telepractice, via in-classroom courses or via distance learning. Training must be provided by a practitioner experienced in providing telepractice services, and must include equipment and technology, clinical practice via telepractice, security of patient services and records, including, to the extent feasible during the state of emergency, compliance with Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Telepractitioners must maintain documentation of their training topics and hours in telepractice for inspection by the Board upon request.
- c. During the state of emergency, and for 90 days following the termination of the state of emergency, the Board hereby waives the requirement for an in-person evaluation to occur prior to the start of telepractice services. A Board licensed speech-language pathologist or audiologist may begin to provide services via telepractice to a client who is clinically appropriate and has a medical need. After 90 days following the termination of the state of emergency, a licensed speech-language pathologist or audiologist must perform an in-person assessment of the client's need for services and candidacy for telepractice, including behavioral, physical and cognitive abilities to participate in telepractice services.
- d. All telepractice services provided during the state of emergency must be medically necessary and clinically appropriate. Where speech-language pathology assistants are providing services via telepractice, the Board's regulations, including rules on supervision, remain applicable: at least 10% of services rendered by the assistant each month must be provided under Direct Supervision, and an additional 10% of the assistant's services must be supervised either directly or indirectly.
- e. Licensees must properly identify the patient using, at a minimum, the patient's name and date of birth and, where possible, a photo ID.
- f. To the extent feasible, licensees must ensure the same rights to confidentiality and security as provided during in-person services. Licensees must inform patients of any relevant privacy considerations.